
THE SOWER
ARTHUR CHURCH OF CHRIST
415 W. 4TH STREET
ARTHUR, IL 61911
Ron Bartanen, Evangelist

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Have you visited our website lately? (www.Arthurcoc.com)

NOT WANTING JESUS?

It seems inconceivable to me that there would be anyone who would not want Jesus' presence in their lives. However, the fact of the matter is that there were many even during the earthly lifetime of our Lord who wanted nothing to do with Him. An especially vivid example of that is given in the 8th chapter of Luke, in the account of the casting out of a legion of demons. One would think Jesus would have been welcomed by all in any community. After all, someone who could cast out demons from undesirables and heal their sick, what more could you ask? The problem came, however, when Jesus cast them out they, at their request, were allowed entrance into some nearby hogs. Hogs, being "unclean" animals by the standard of the Law, were a fitting dwelling place for demons. The problem arose when the hogs, so confused and maddened by the intrusion of the demons, stampeded into the lake and drowned. As word spread concerning this remarkable miracle, a multitude came to Jesus, not to praise Him for transforming a demon-possessed vexation into a respectable member of the community, but rather "besought him that he might depart from them" (v. 37). With the loss of so many hogs, surely this man would not be a good influence on the economy!

Much like these people, many today are not comfortable with Jesus. Even the very mention of His name is seemingly offensive. The fact that belief in Christ has transformed many from drunkenness, drug addiction, sexual perversion, thievery, etc. into law-abiding citizens and neighbors means little to those who are struck by fear at the mention of His name. These seek to protect their children from His influence by not only forbidding any mention of Him by teachers, but also penalizing children who would dare refer to Him. Any favorable reference to Him or to His followers must be censored out of history books for fear young impressionable minds might be impacted.

Some would exclude Jesus because of the contrast between their way of living and that of Christ. Evil so fills their hearts and lives, it is impossible for them to feel comfortable in the presence of even any who would devoutly follow Him. In our day, they would consider Him archaic, misinformed and intolerant. For instance, He was in agreement with the scriptural definition of marriage as affirmed by God in the beginning—the marriage of a man and a woman (Matt. 19:4-5). In a sex-obsessed society, many would feel uncomfortable hearing Jesus say, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already in his heart" (Matt.

5:28). It is much easier, it seems, to ask Jesus to “depart from them.”

There are others who have no particular quarrel against Jesus, but because of other factors in their lives they simply find no room for Him. Although perhaps not purposely, but simply by filling their lives with material concerns, they find neither time nor energy for Christ, Bible-reading or church. Other things become more demanding, clamoring for attention. The voice of Christ becomes perhaps nothing more than a distant memory.

What about you? Would you have been among those in the multitude who asked Jesus to depart? Would you, either purposely or without thought, send Him away? Or would you welcome Him into your life? Does the idea of His presence cause you discomfort? Maybe you’re like Peter, who, impressed by Jesus’ powers, said to the Lord, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). But He found that by the Lord’s grace, he could find cleansing and acceptance, even to the point of being a faithful apostle and dying for Him.
–Ron

Why is it that people who know the least know it the loudest?

If you feel you have no faults, that’s another one.

MOST VALUABLE DISCOVERY

In 1847 Sir James Simpson of Edinburgh discovered the use of chloroform as an anesthetic in surgery. Some have claimed that this was the most significant discovery of modern medicine.

In his later years, Sir James was lecturing at Edinburgh University and a student asked, “What do you consider to be the most valuable discovery of your lifetime?”

Sir James answered quickly, “My most valuable discovery was when I discovered myself a sinner and that Jesus Christ was my Savior.”

Similarly, at age 82, near death, almost blind, and with fading memory, John Newton, author of the timeless song, “Amazing Grace”, wrote these words: “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: I’m a great *sinner* and Christ is a great *savior*.”

The book of Romans makes clear these significant truths that Simpson and Newton articulated.

The *problem* is sin (Romans 3:10, 23). The *penalty* for sin is death (6:23). The *power* of God unto salvation is the Gospel (1:16). The *provision* for sin is Christ’s death (5:8). The *price* paid for sin is His blood (5:9). The *process* by which we contact that blood? By placing our faith and trust in Jesus (5:1), confessing Christ (10:9-10), turning from our sins in repentance (2:4), and being buried with Christ in baptism (6:1-4). Then we are to dedicate the rest of our lives in service to Him (6:12-18; 12:1).

The most valuable discovery that YOU can make is your Savior too! --Alan Eldridge/David A. Sawyer, *House to House/Heart to Heart*

THE CHRISTIAN BARBER

There was a barber that thought he should share his faith with his customers more than he had been doing lately. So the next morning when the sun came up and the barber got up out of bed, he said, "Today I am going to witness to the first man that walks through my door."

Soon after he opened his shop the first man came in and said, "I want a shave." The barber said, "Sure, just sit in the seat and I'll be with you in a moment." The barber went in the back and prayed a quick desperate prayer, saying, "God, the first customer came in and I'm going to witness to him. So give me the wisdom to know just the right thing to say to him. Amen."

Then quickly the barber came out with his razor knife in one hand and a Bible in the other, while saying, "Good morning, sir. I have a question for you. Are you ready to die?"

--Author unknown; from Mansa Church, Uganda website

THE GRACE OF GOD

He gives me hope and courage
To face each newborn day.
He guides me through the shadows
To light and show the way.
He comforts and sustains me
In times of my distress.
His Word gives me solace
To find true happiness.
He's willing to forgive me
When I may go astray.
He says He'll always love me
And does my fears allay.
He never does forsake me
In moments of despair,
And when I need a helping hand,
I always find Him there.

--Harold F. Mohn, *Logansport, IN Bulletin*

A SPRING OF WATER

"But whosoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

Water! That precious gift for the tired and thirsty. Water! That essential refreshment we all need. Jesus, however, offers water we don't have to carry or purify. No, this is water that wells up within us. This is the water that the Holy Spirit brings us. This is the water that gives us eternal life that starts now and lasts forever! --Highway Church, *Lantern*, Sullivan

"WHEN IT FEELS SO RIGHT" will be today's message, with Isaiah 5:20-21 as the text.

PRAYER CONCERNS: The pacemaker implant went well, and my heart is beating normally now. Thanks to the many who have had me in their prayers. *** Continue to remember :Doris (doing well); Ruby Bradd (Clinton; recovering from cancer); Wayne Polk (Shelbyville minister; health problems); the chaos that is taking place in our country as lawlessness increases.